

Brunswick History Commission: Board Meeting Minutes, June 17, 2021

Attending: Dr. Wayne Allgaier (Chair), Vicki Dearing (Vice Chair), John Caves (Secretary): John Faith (Board Member), David McIntosh (Board Member), Don Peterson (Board Member)

Absent: Bruce Funk (Board Member)

Meeting called to order in the Brunswick Museum at 7:00pm by Dr. Allgaier.

Dr. Allgaier began the meeting by reminding the board of the History Commission's mission statement: "The Commission collects, organizes, and preserves records of local historical significance and make this information available to the public." Don Peterson noted the difference between "records" and "artifacts," which distinguishes the History Commission from the Museum.

The bulk of the meeting was divided between nine subjects:

1. Weekly "workshop" meetings (2:00pm on Thursdays at City Hall)

- Dr. Allgaier reported that the members present at today's workshop (Dr. Allgaier, John Faith, Don Peterson, and John Caves) had filed 47 years of the *Brunswick Citizen* into the Commission's new archival boxes, with one box for each year.
- Dr. Allgaier noted that attendance at the weekly workshops was optional for board members, and that all History Commission members and anyone from the Brunswick community who is interested in historical research are welcome to attend.
- The board agreed that the purpose of the weekly workshops is to discuss and/or work on current research and to work on preserving records (e.g., filing the *Citizens* or scanning old photos).
- Don Peterson raised the question of how the Commission would spread the word among the Brunswick community about the weekly workshops. The board agreed that individual members would share information about it with their Facebook friend groups and that the Commission would build an email list by collecting the email addresses of citizens who come to the workshops.
- Dr. Allgaier said that he would email the board members each Wednesday to get a sense of who is planning to attend the workshop that week.

2. Budget

- Dr. Allgaier reminded the board that the History Commission has had an annual budget of \$1,500 in previous years, but that most of the budget for this year has been spent purchasing the archival boxes.
- David McIntosh asked about a \$30,000 grant from Elizabeth Frye to the Commission a few years ago. Board members thought it may have been spent on the cemetery or absorbed in the City budget when the History Commission turned over responsibility for maintaining the cemetery. Dr. Allgaier said he would ask City Clerk Carrie Myers about it.
- Dr. Allgaier noted that the Commission has been authorized \$500 for FY2022 and asked for ideas on how to spend it. Don Peterson suggested purchasing shelving to hold the old *Citizens* and other records, like the shelving the library uses. John Faith noted that the library also has a (possibly incomplete) collection of old *Citizens* that could be easier for the public to access than the ones kept by the Commission. Don Peterson said that he would talk to the library to find out about their shelving and their *Citizen* collection.

- Dr. Allgaier noted that the Commission could also purchase some filing cabinets and other office equipment.

3. History Commission website

- Dr. Allgaier reminded the board that Donald Huscha designed and maintains the website, and Jerry Knight has been helping him to upload content. John Caves has requested editor access to the website and will take over from Jerry.
- David McIntosh noted that the board needs to find out if there is a limit to the amount of content that can be posted on the website.
- Dr. Allgaier said that the Commission might eventually be able to digitize the old *Citizens*, but that would probably have to wait until the Commission can get a grant to do so.
- David McIntosh pointed out that Julie Maynard must have had a digitized version of the *Blade Times* in order to publish the articles from 100 years ago in the *Citizen*. Dr. Allgaier said he would check with her.

4. History Commission Facebook page

- Dr. Allgaier said that Jerry Knight has been maintaining the Facebook page and was willing to continue doing so for a little while, but would eventually stop after he moves to Georgia.
- John Faith said that he could potentially take over from Jerry.
- John Caves said that he had gotten access to the Facebook page in order to post house histories, and so could be a backup if necessary.

5. History Commission email account

- Dr. Allgaier announced that Carrie Myers would monitor the email account and forward relevant messages to him. Dr. Allgaier will then forward emails to the relevant board members depending on each member's area of focus or expertise.

6. Brunswick Citizen storage

- Dr. Allgaier reported that the company the Commission had purchased the archival boxes from was good to do business with, and that he would get back in touch with them to get the boxes we need for storing old photographs.

7. What counts as "history"? What is worth preserving?

- Dr. Allgaier noted that there are multiple definitions of what is considered history.
- Don Peterson and others said that we need to have an eye toward preserving records of the present, because things that happen now soon become history.
- David McIntosh asked what we would consider the geographical boundary for "local history." i.e., is it just things that happen within Brunswick city limits? Dr. Allgaier said that it would include Knoxville, Petersville, and possibly Burkittsville, because they are nearby and don't necessarily have their own historical societies. He also said that the Commission should focus on preserving things that can't be found elsewhere (e.g., old Frederick News Post issues can be found elsewhere, so the Commission doesn't need to preserve them all).

- John Faith pointed out that the Commission should nonetheless monitor the *News Post* for stories related to Brunswick, because the *Citizen* being shut down makes preserving city history difficult.
- John Caves said he would save online *News Post* articles about Brunswick as .pdf files and periodically add them to the History Commission website.

8. Naming convention for website entries

- John Faith pointed out that files uploaded to the History Commission website need to be named so as to include as many relevant searchable terms as possible. This not only helps citizens to find what they are looking for on the site, it also helps Commission members to not upload duplicates.
- The board agreed that the search function on the website works well now and is the most useful part of the site.
- John Caves said he will check with Jerry Knight to learn how he named files and will also try to figure out the mechanics of the search engine. He will report back with a recommendation for a naming convention at the next board meeting.

9. Relationship between the History Commission and the Museum

- Dr. Allgaier said that he talked to City Councilman and History Commission liaison Chris Vigliotti, who will talk to City Councilman and Museum liaison Andrew St. John about ways to improve coordination between the Commission and the Museum.
- Dr. Allgaier outlined his conception of the division of labor between the Commission and the Museum. The Commission would collect and preserve historic documents and pictures, make them available to the public via the website and Facebook page, be a resource for those with inquiries, and coordinate with the Museum. The Museum would collect and preserve historic artifacts as well as some documents and pictures, make them available to the public via the museum and the museum website, interpret local history, and coordinate with the Commission.
- Vicki Dearing said she would show Dr. Allgaier the Museum's document collection. She suggested that the Commission could offer to help scan the Museum's documents.
- Dr. Allgaier said that the Commission's website should link to the Museum's and vice versa. He added that the Commission and Museum would now both be reporting to the City Council once a quarter.
- Don Peterson suggested that the Commission invite City Council members and Museum Director Jim Castle to its meetings.
- Dr. Allgaier brought up the idea of the Commission and the Museum exchanging liaisons to attend each other's meetings. David McIntosh expressed interest in being the Commission's liaison to the Museum.

Don Peterson mentioned that the Commission needs a dedicated storage room. Vicki Dearing said she had ideas for how to organize it if the Commission were able to obtain such a space.

John Faith motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:21pm. The motion was seconded by John Caves and unanimously approved.

The next board meeting will be at 7:00pm on September 22, 2021 at City Hall.